



Rural Utilities Service

Rural Utilities Service
1400 Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20250
www.usda.gov/rus/



Committed to the future of rural communities.

The Telecommunications Program



- Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan Program (“Infrastructure”)
- Distance Learning/Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program (“DLT”)
- “Community Connect” Grant Program
- Broadband Access Loans and Loan Guarantee Program (“Broadband”)

Infrastructure Loan Programs:

Program	2006
Hardship:	\$145 million
Cost of Money:	\$424 million
FFB:	\$125 million



Loan Purposes

Loans may be used to build new and modernize existing telecommunications networks in rural areas:

New Construction

Improvements

Expansions

Acquisitions

Refinancing





DLT... *Purpose and Eligibility*

The **Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program** is designed to encourage and improve educational and health care services in rural areas through the use of telecommunications, computer networks, and related advanced technologies.





FY 2006 RUS Budget

Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Loan and Grant Program:

Loans: \$25 million

Grants: \$30 million





DLT... *Purpose and Eligibility*

Who is eligible?

Incorporated organizations, partnerships, Indian tribes, or other legal entities that:

Operate a school, college, university, learning center, training facility, regional educational laboratory, hospital, medical center, and medical clinic; or

Provide DLT service to other entities at rates that ensure that the economic value and benefits of the DLT grant are passed on to the other entities.





DLT... *Types of Funding*

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program is structured to provide **three categories of financial assistance:**

- 1) *100% Grants;*
- 2) *Combination Loans and Grants; and*
- 3) *100% Loans.*





DLT...

For additional information

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/dlt/dlt.htm>





Broadband Grants... *Community Connect*

What is Community Connect?

A nationally competitive grant program to provide broadband service on a “community-oriented connectivity” basis to:

The most rural and

Economically challenged communities.





Broadband Grants... *Community Connect*

*Broadband services **must be provided** to rural schools, libraries, education centers, health care providers, law enforcement agencies, and public safety organizations.*

***A community center**, accessible “free of charge for two years,” must also be made available.*





Broadband Grants... *Community Connect*

Eligible Applicant:

- Incorporated organization
- Indian Tribe or Tribal organization
- State or Local unit of government
- Cooperatives
- Limited Liability Company





Broadband Grants... *Community Connect*

Eligibility Requirements:

No existing broadband service

One community recognized by the census (pop. < 20,000)

Free broadband service to critical facilities

Offer residential and business service

Provide a community center with
10 computer access points





Broadband Grants... *Community Connect*

Eligible Grant Purposes:

- Construction, acquisition or leasing of facilities
- Construction of a community center
- End-User Equipment
- Operating expenses for first two years to provide service to critical facilities





Broadband Grants... *Community Connect*

Community Connect Grant Program:

- *\$9 million available this year!*
- *Application window to be announced...*
- *Visit the web for more information:*

www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/commconnect.htm





Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program

Presenters

General Field Representatives



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Purpose of the Broadband Program

To provide loans for the cost of construction, improvement, and acquisition of facilities and equipment for broadband services in eligible rural communities.

Broadband Loan Program: FY2006 Budget

- 4% Funding: \$64 Million
- Treasury Rate Funding: \$976 Million
- Guaranteed Funding: \$64 Million

Program Statistics

156 Applications Received
Totaling \$2,326,000,000

Applications Processed as of December 09, 2005

52 Approved

\$824,000,000

9 In Review

\$162,000,000

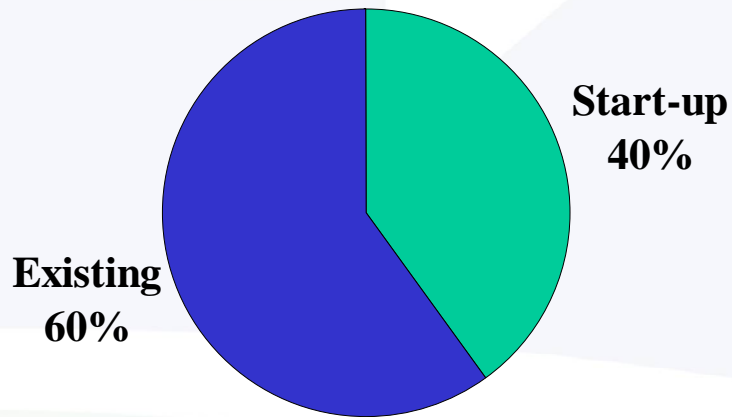
95 Returned

\$1,340,000,000

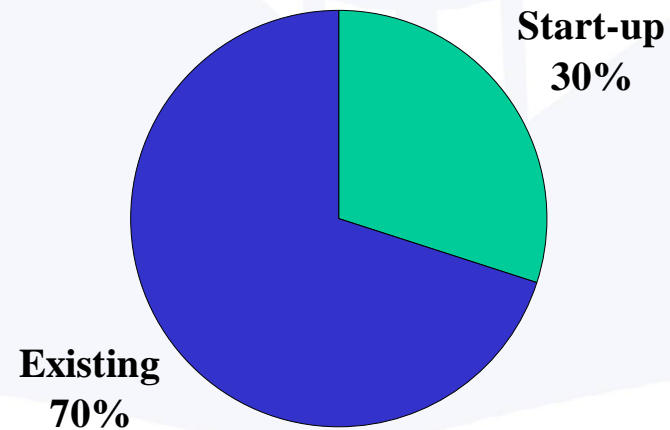


Program Statistics – Type of Entity

Received

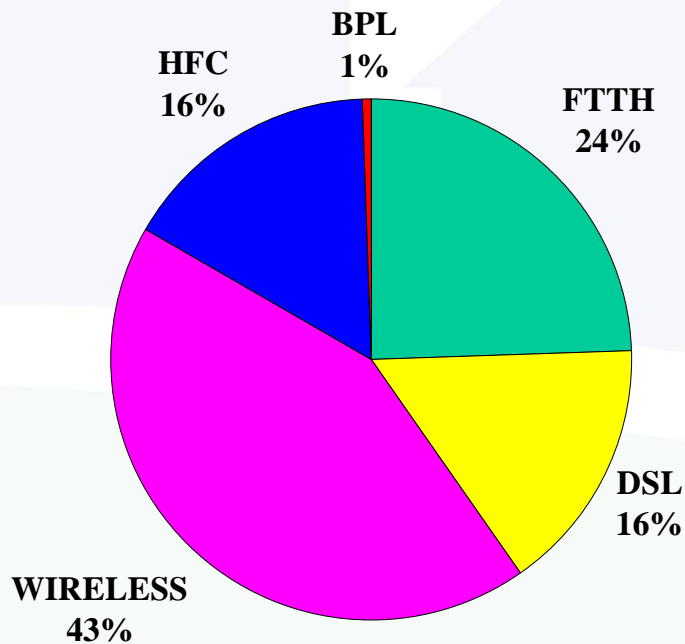


Approved

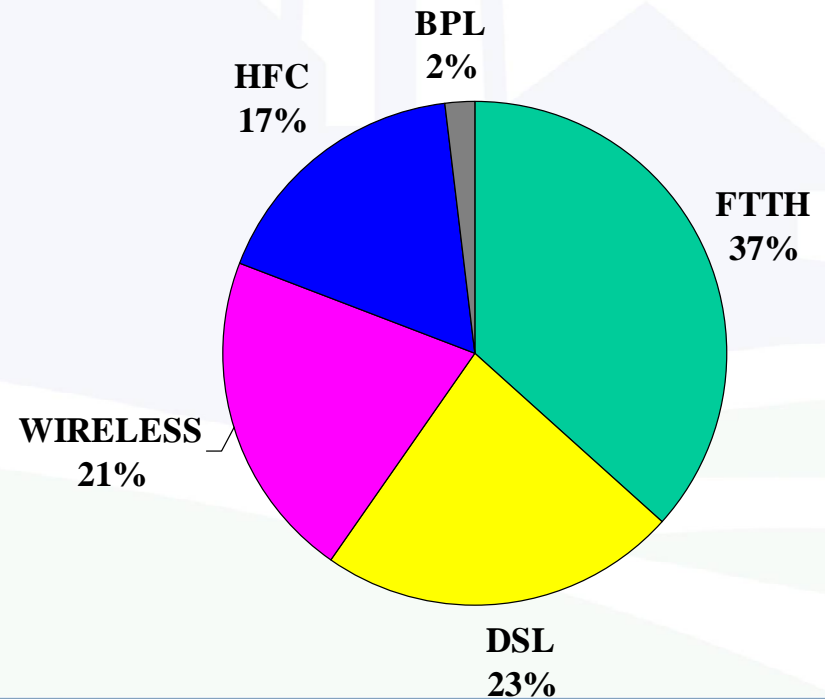


Program Statistics – Technologies

Received



Approved



Program Statistics – Why they are returned!

- Insufficient credit support
- Insufficient market survey
- Technology does not meet requirements
- Cannot meet minimum financial requirements
- Incomplete application

Eligible Rural Community

Eligible rural community means any incorporated or unincorporated place in the United States, its territories and insular possessions (including any area within the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau) that has no more than 20,000 inhabitants, based on the most recent available population statistics from the Bureau of the Census – <http://www.census.gov>

Broadband Service

- Must enable a subscriber to transmit and receive at a rate of no less than 200 kilobits per second; and
- Must provide data transmission service and may provide voice, graphics, and video.

Applicant Eligibility

A legally organized entity providing or proposing to provide service to an eligible rural community that has sufficient authority to enter into a contract with Rural Development, Utilities Programs (RDUP), and can carry out the purposes of the loan.

Eligible Organizations

- Corporations
- Limited Liability Companies
- Cooperative or Mutual Organizations
- Indian Tribes
- Public Body

Who is not Eligible?

- Individuals
- Partnerships (including LLPs)
- Any entity serving more than 2% of the telephone subscriber lines installed in the United States

Eligible Purposes

- New construction and improvements to existing facilities
- Broadband facilities leased under the terms of a capital lease (limited to 5 years and option of ownership)
- Acquisitions of Assets (less than 50% of the requested loan amount)
- Refinancing existing Telecommunications Program debt (up to 40% of requested loan amount)

Ineligible Purposes

- Acquire stock, facilities, or equipment of an affiliate of the applicant
- Finance customer terminal equipment (including modems) or inside wiring not owned by the applicant
- Vehicles that are not used primarily in construction

Ineligible Purposes

- Broadband facilities leased under an operating lease (i.e., tower leases, building leases, land leases, etc.)
- Mergers or consolidations
- Operating expenses (i.e., salaries, marketing, legal, etc.)

Types of Loans

- Direct Cost-of-Money Loans
- Direct 4% Loans
- Private Lender Guarantees

Direct Cost-of-Money Loans

Bear interest at the cost of money to the Treasury for comparable maturities.

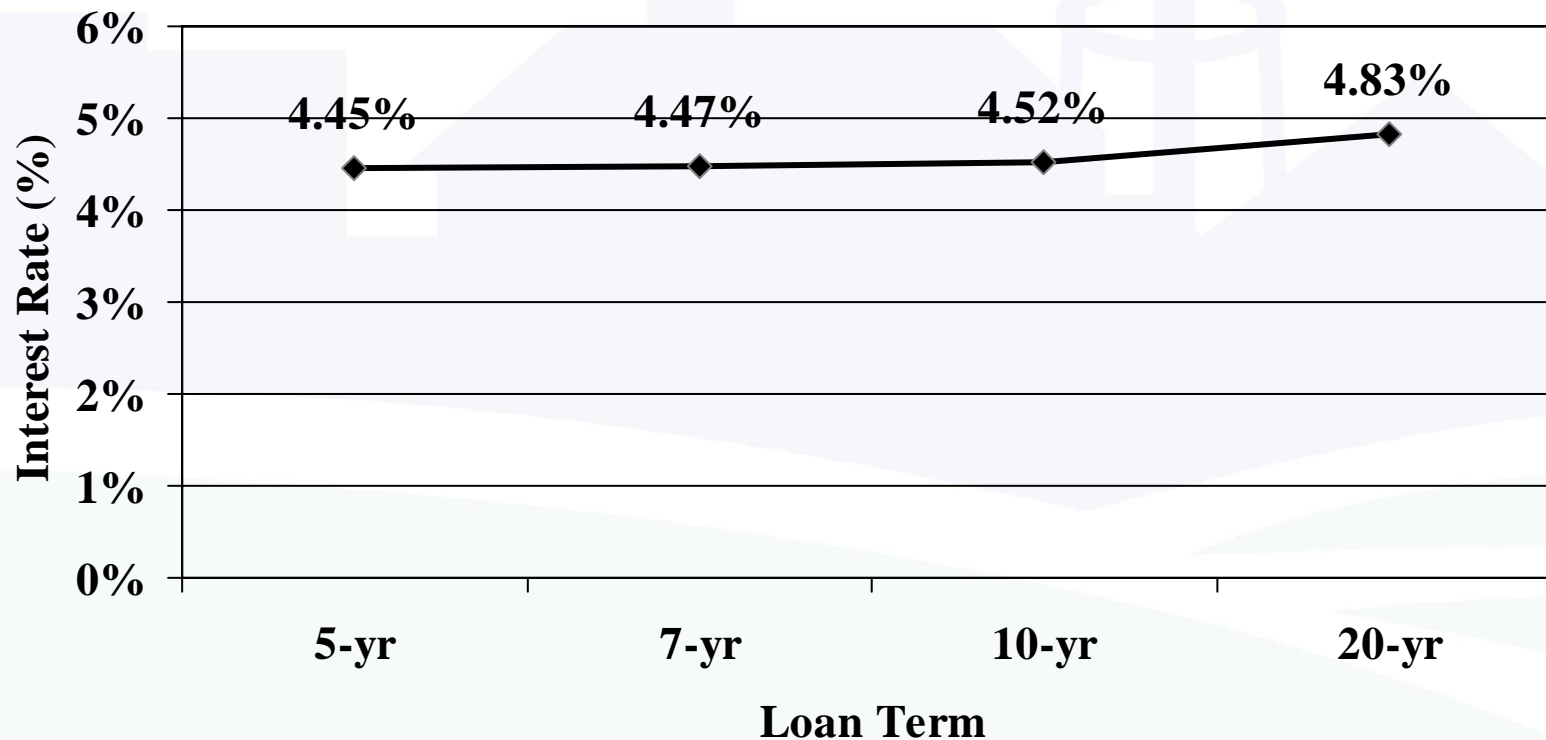
The interest rate is set at the time of each advance of funds

The current rates can be found at:

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/releases/h15/update>

Direct Cost-of-Money Rates

Rates as of December 1, 2005



Direct 4% Loans

- To be eligible for this loan, the applicant must be proposing to serve a community that:
 - Does not have any broadband service;
 - Has a population of 2,500 or less;
 - Located in a county with a per capita personal income that is less than or equal to 65% of the national per capita income; and
 - Has a service area with a maximum population density of 20 persons per square mile

Direct 4% Loans

- Loan Amount is limited to \$7.5 million
- Can be made simultaneously with Direct Cost-of-Money loans

Loan Guarantees

- Bear interest at a rate set by the lender;
 - The interest rate must be fixed, and the same for the guaranteed and un-guaranteed portion of the loan.
- Are made for no more than 80 percent of the amount of principal

Loan Terms

- Loans are made for a term equal to the expected useful service life of the facilities financed
- Funds are advanced as needed
- Interest is payable monthly on funds advanced
- Principal payments are deferred for 1 year from the date of the first advance

Loan Terms

- The minimum amount of a loan that RDUP will consider is \$100,000
- Maximum loan amounts apply only to the direct 4% loans (\$7.5 Million)
- The minimum TIER is 1.25 at the end of the 5th year of the feasibility study

Loan Terms

TIER means **T**imes **I**nterest **E**arned **R**atio.

TIER is the ratio of an applicant's net income (after taxes) plus interest expense, all divided by interest expense. For the purpose of this calculation, all amounts will be annual figures and interest expense will include only interest on debt with a maturity greater than one year.

Loan Terms

- Rural Development generally requires a first lien on the borrower's assets
 - Will share the first lien position (pari passu) with another lender on a pro rata basis
 - Will develop security arrangements if bond financing is involved in the project

Application Information

The regulation, application, application guide, and all other relevant information is available on our website at:

www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/broadband.htm



Application Information

Listing of all approved and pending communities:

**[http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/broadband/communities
2-23-2005.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/broadband/communities2-23-2005.pdf)**

This list is generally updated on a weekly basis.



Application Submission

- Prospective applicants should contact their respective General Field Representative (GFR) prior to submitting the application
 - List of the GFRs and the contact information is included in Application Guide
- There is no deadline to submit applications
- Applications will be reviewed and processed on a first-come, first-served basis

Key Components of an Application

Credit Support

Business Plan

Market Survey

Financial Information

System Design



Credit Support

THE NUMBER ONE REASON
APPLICATIONS ARE
RETURNED!



7 CFR 1738.20

- Minimum of 20 % of the requested loan amount
- Cash for one full year operating expense
- Net plant, cash, letter of credit

How much do I need?

If the loan application is for \$1,000,000:

minimum
credit
support

$$= (\$1,000,000) * (20\%) = (\$200,000)$$

Cash Requirement

- Defined as sufficient cash to cover one full year of operating expenses; and
- For telecommunication companies with positive cash flow for the two previous years, this requirement can be waived

What is a full year of expenses?

The operating expense, as shown for the second year of the five year loan period, as detailed in the pro-forma financial statement included as part of the application.

What is acceptable for Credit Support?

- Cash
- Net plant less any outstanding liens
- Licenses (purchase price less any amortization/depreciation or outstanding liens)
- Irrevocable letter of credit (LOC)

*What is **not** acceptable as Credit Support?*

- **Account receivables**
- **LOC for cash requirement**
- **Parent's assets**
- **Equity infusions over the life of the loan**
- **Loans**
- **Value of company if sold**
- **Value of customers**

Letter of Credit: Bank Terms

- Investor to enter into LOC to benefit Broadband Borrower and the Government
- LOC secured and serviced by the investor
- LOC to be irrevocable permitting unconditional draws by the Broadband Borrower and the Government
- LOC to be in effect for 5 years

Letter of Credit: Borrower Terms

(Included as conditions in the loan agreement)

- LOC must be in effect for the shorter of 5 years or until the Borrower achieves an equity level of 20%
- Borrower agrees to draw on the LOC if the quarterly financials show a negative cash flow.

Borrower Terms: Continued

- Borrower agrees to draw on the LOC when directed by Rural Development
- Failure to maintain the LOC will be an Event of Default

Credit Support Examples

<i>Type of Entity</i>	Start-up
<i>Loan Amount</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>Full Year Ops. Expense</i>	\$300,000

<i>Minimum Credit Support</i>	\$400,000 (20% of \$2M)
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Of this \$400,000 amount, **\$300,000** must be cash to fulfill the operating expense cash requirement.

The remaining **\$100,000** can be met with cash or other acceptable options previously listed.

Credit Support Examples

<i>Type of Entity</i>	Start-up
<i>Loan Amount</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>Full Year Ops. Expense</i>	\$500,000

<i>Minimum Credit Support</i>	\$500,000
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If Operating Expense amount is greater than 20% of the requested loan, then the Operating Expense figure becomes the credit support amount.

All **\$500,000** must be in the form of cash.

Credit Support Examples

<i>Type of Entity</i>	Existing Telecom* <small>*with two prior years' positive cash flow</small>
<i>Loan Amount</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>Full Year Ops. Expense</i>	\$500,000

<i>Minimum Credit Support</i>	\$400,000
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In this case, the cash requirement is waived for the applicant. However, minimum Credit Support of **\$400,000** (20% of \$2M) still applies, and can be met with cash or other acceptable options previously listed.

Evidence of Credit Support

- **Audited financial statements**
- **Bank statements**
- **Escrow accounts**
- **Investment agreements**
- **Line of credit**
- **Appraisals of assets performed by qualified firms**

Satisfying Credit Support

- Evidence that the credit support requirement can be satisfied must be included in the application
- The credit support requirement must be satisfied before loans funds are released.

Satisfying Credit Support

- Any cash requirement will have to be available in the applicant's accounts at loan closing
 - These funds can be used for operating expenses after closing. They do not have to be maintained in a reserve

Additional Support Requirements

If the financial analysis of the application indicates that an applicant will experience a negative cash flow at any time during the forecast period, RDUP will require that arrangements be put in place to make additional infusions of equity.

Business Plan

- General Overview
 - How will loan funds be used?
 - Are non-loan funds required?
 - Details on working capital
 - Investments required
 - Management

Business Plan

- Business Purposes
 - Goods and Services
 - Existing services, if applicable
 - Proposed goods and services
 - State of development
 - Status of licenses and regulatory approvals

Business Plan

- Main competitors in Target Market
- Market Analysis
 - Description of primary market
 - Influences to industry
 - Target customers
 - Product Pricing
 - Advertising/Promotion
- Financial Information



MARKET SURVEY



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Market Survey

Critical to determine the interest and demands of the targeted communities for the proposed service offerings

Market Research

Provides:

- Knowledge of market potential
- Understanding of competition
- Knowledge of demands/needs of potential customer base

Supports:

- Feasibility studies
- Strategic planning goals

Market Survey

- Market Survey Methods
 - Direct Mailings
 - Telephone Surveys
 - Door-to-Door
 - Town Meetings
 - Pre-subscriptions/signed contracts

Market Research

- Do **not** use the Internet as a survey tool
 - Not an indication of the desires of the whole population
 - Only surveying those who have computers and Internet service; **and**
 - Only those who subscribe to your Internet service
 - Cannot extrapolate results to the community as a whole

Market Survey - Design

- Computer ownership
- Current Internet usage – dial-up, Broadband, time online, and rate
- Satisfaction with current provider – quality of service, value, and likes/dislikes
- Willingness to switch to Broadband or change providers
- Service offerings/rates (including any installation or upfront charges for equipment)

Market Survey - Design

- Other service offerings with rates
 - Voice
 - Video
 - Triple Play
- Demographic Information

Market Survey – Design

Do not list a range of prices when doing a market survey because people will usually pick the lowest prices

Market Survey

- The Magic Number – How many responses/surveys are sufficient?
 - There is no magic number
 - Statistically significant – depends on the size of the population

Market Survey

In the end, the sample must be representative of the population of the community

Market Survey

- If “green field” areas are proposed, include information that justifies the subscriber penetration rates since no market information is available
 - Developers build-out plans
 - Lots proposed to be constructed
 - Lots already sold

Market Survey – Results

- Based on households/businesses – not population (generally one connection per household)
- Recognize the differences between communities – income, age, and competition

Market Survey - Results

- Do not base results on:

- National Statistics

*“No direct mailer or door-to-door surveys were completed since past history for broadband service clearly demonstrates the need. See OPASTCO web page ... for details of rural survey for broadband subscription rates...”
(Applicant projected 25-30 percent subscription rate)*

- Conjecture

“We are currently achieving a penetration rate of 10% of the households without an aggressive marketing campaign. Once we launch our advertising campaign, we expect to achieve a 30% subscription rate”

Market Survey

In the end...

The market survey must support the applicant's subscriber forecast, both in total numbers and in distribution among service offerings.

Note: Some financial models are highly dependent on a certain percentage of subscribers taking higher data rates at the higher prices

Market Survey

One last thing – market surveys are only considered valid if conducted within 6 months preceding the date of submission of the application to RDUP.



Financial Information



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Financial Information

- Provide sufficient financial information for RDUP to determine that the loan will be feasible and adequately secured
- Forecast analysis should be based on knowledge of the external and internal factors that affect the company's operations
- Historical and projected financial statements required

Historical Financial Statements

- Certified financial statements for the last 3 years (or for as long as applicant has been in business if less than 3 years)
 - Audited statements are preferred, if available
 - Balance Sheet
 - Income Statement
 - Statement of Cash Flow

Historical Financial Statements

- If applicant is a subsidiary of another company, parent's financial statements are also required
- If another affiliated company is providing operations and/or management services to the applicant, that company's financial statements are required

Subscriber Projections

- Provide projections on a yearly basis for 5 years
- Include existing and proposed communities
- Breakdown by each community and by the types of services proposed
- MUST correspond with market survey results

5-Year Financial Forecast

- Must be inclusive of **ALL** operations of the applicant
- Must include a balance sheet, income statement, and statement of cash flow
- Must include **detailed** assumptions that support the projected numbers

Revenues

- Broadband Revenues
 - DSL, Wireless, and Cable Modem
- Sales Revenues
- Cablevision (TV) Revenues
- Telecom Revenues
 - Local and Long Distance
- Dial-Up Internet Revenues
- Access/Connecting Company Revenues
- Web Hosting/Storage Revenues

Expenses

- Cost of Goods Sold
- Access/Transport Fees (T1's, DS3's, etc.)
- Programming Expenses
- Cable and Spectrum Leases
- Connecting Company Fees
- Depreciation Expense
- Interest Expense

Expenses

- Salaries/Payroll Expense
- Rent/Leases (Buildings, Towers, etc.)
- Miscellaneous
 - Utilities, Supplies, Insurance, Advertising, Maintenance, and Taxes
 - Professional Fees (Accountants, Lawyers, etc.)

Depreciation Schedule

- List categories of equipment and facilities and the expected useful life
- Useful life should be based on the manufacturers' recommended useful life
- Will determine maturity of the loan
- Schedule included in guide

Outstanding Indebtedness

- Include a listing of all outstanding indebtedness, including loan maturities, interest rates, and terms and conditions
- Include a copy of all loan documentation
 - Notes
 - Loan Contracts/Agreements
 - Mortgages



System Design



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System Design

- Why a System Design is required?
 - Technology – minimum data transmission rate as defined in the current NOFA
 - Technical parameters have been addressed

System Design

- Consists of all the information in order to do a comprehensive technical evaluation of the proposed system
- Prepared and certified by a qualified employee of the applicant's staff or an outside consultant who is licensed in the state where the facilities will be constructed

System Design

- The System Design shall include a detailed description of the following:
 - Applicant's service territory
 - Technology (DSL, BPL, PON, cable modem, etc.)
 - Types of services (voice, video, and data) and corresponding number of subscribers
 - Existing system (if applicable) and proposed system
 - Licenses/agreements required to operate the proposed system

System Design

- Other items needed to support the System Design
 - Project Build-out schedule
 - Project Costs
 - Network Diagrams
 - Environmental Report

System Design

- Project Build-out Schedule
 - Annual Basis
 - Projects should be shown on a community/site basis
- Project Costs
 - Includes loan funds & non-loan funds to be spent over the loan forecast period
 - Schedules Q-1 through Q-11 should be completed accordingly
 - Information supporting the costs in each schedule should also be included

System Design

- Network Diagrams
 - Existing & Proposed Network
 - Block diagrams that clearly show the flow of traffic from the subscriber to the backbone network
- Wireless Networks
 - Approximate coverage area of each radio site
 - Communities should be clearly marked

Environmental Report

- All construction proposed in the loan application must be covered by an Environmental Report
- The Environmental Report must be prepared in accordance with 7 CFR Part 1794.
- CFR and guide for preparing the Environmental Report is available on the web site
 - <http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/publications/html/1794.htm>
 - http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/publications/word_files/1794a600.doc
- 7 CFR Part 1970 - New environmental regulation under development



Application Review Process



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Review Process

1. Initial Review

2. Detailed Review

3. Loan Committees

Initial Review

- Purpose
 - Regulatory & Statutory requirements has been met
 - Essential information to do a detailed financial & technical analysis
- Application will fall into 1 of 3 categories
 - Complete
 - Incomplete
 - Return

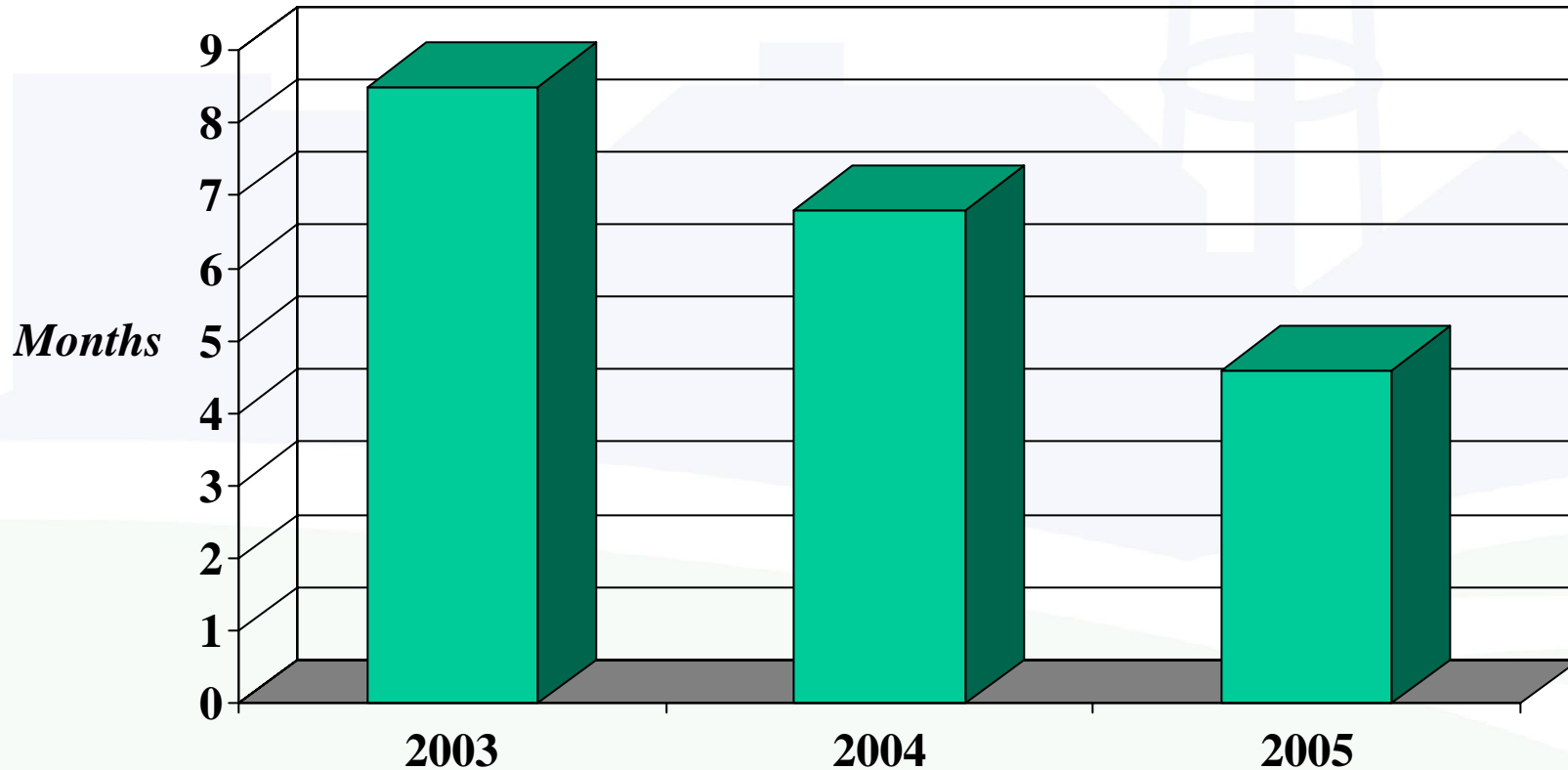
Detailed Review

- In-depth financial analysis
 - Feasibility Studies
 - Sensitivity Studies
- Comprehensive technical evaluation
 - Capable of providing required bandwidth
 - Cost estimates
 - Service territory

Loan Committees

- Assistant Administrator's Loan Committee (AALC)
- Senior Loan Committee (SLC)

How long does it take to get approved?



Legal Requirements

- Loan and Security Documents
 - Loan Agreement
 - Mortgage
 - Promissory Note
 - Closing Instructions

Legal Requirements

- Satisfaction of Legal Requirements
 - Executed Loan and Security Documents
 - Regulatory/Commission Approval
 - Certificate of Resolutions
 - Evidence of UCC Filing
 - Executed Pledged Deposit Account Agreement
 - Attorney Opinion

Release of Loan Funds

- Clearance of Loan and Security Documents
- Submission of Current Financials
- Executed Certificate of Authority
- Executed Automated Clearing House (ACH) Form
- Evidence of Fidelity/Theft Insurance Coverage
- Evidence of Satisfying Additional Conditions

Reporting Requirements

- Quarterly Reports
 - Financial Reports – Balance Sheet, Income Statement, and Statement of Cash Flow
 - Construction/Subscriber Reports – showing the number of sites/communities in operation and the respective number of subscribers
- Annual CPA audits
 - Follow guidelines in 7 CFR Part 1773

Construction Procedures

All construction financed by RDUP loan funds must be done in accordance with RUS Bulletin 1738-2, Rural Broadband Access Loan and Loan Guarantee Program, Advance and Construction Procedures Guide.

The guide is available on our web site at:

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/telecom/broadband.htm>



Advance Procedures

- Advance procedures are covered in 1738-2.
- Borrower submits a request for funds on Financial Requirement Statement – RUS Form 481
- Funds can be requested for:
 - Approved contracts (equipment, construction & engineering)
 - Completed work orders
 - Work Order Fund
 - Acquisitions & Refinancing (if approved in the loan)

Advance Procedures

- Funds are wired into the Pledged Deposit Account
- Pledged Deposit Account shall only be used to advance and disburse loan funds and no other purpose
- Funds should be only be disbursed for the purposes as approved on the RUS Form 481
- First advance should be used to pay-off any interim debt
- Any equity funds proposed to be used for plant investment, as part of the 20% credit support requirement, must be deposited in the Pledged Deposit Account

Questions and Answers

At this time, please feel free to ask all of the questions that you have been thinking about.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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